Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert

## Western Pacific Naval Symposium

## 22 April 2014

Adm. Greenert: Good afternoon colleagues and ladies and gentlemen. You get a double treat today. Just what you need after lunch, two American four star admirals up here talking back to back. What can be better, right, than myself and Admiral Harris?

Admiral Wu, I'd like to thank you very much for hosting this event today, and very much to your staff, the People's Liberation Army, Navy and General for making this such a wonderful and hospitable environment that we're working in.

Once again, I'd like to offer you early birthday wishes.

It's great to be here with the heads of navies and the maritime leaders of the Pacific. I'm here as a guest. The delegate from the United States is actually the Pacific Fleet Commander. I'd also like to take a minute to welcome our newest observer from Pakistan, Asif Sandila. Thank you very much. Admiral Sandila said I'd like to have you all to dinner tonight, but we told him no. Actually, it's already being hosted. So he said maybe some other time, so we'll take a rain check, but thank you very much for that great offer.

I agree with Admiral Wu, this forum is probably the most, first of all that has the most tangible agenda where we get things done around the world; the highest consequences are here in the Pacific. And I would agree with Admiral Wu, we ought to go Pacific. It shouldn't be the Western Pacific, it ought to be Pacific. We're basically there right now as you look at the delegates that we have around here today.

I'd like to talk just a minute about what we've done here, this Western Pacific Naval Symposium, where we are today and where I think we need to go.

We're here today as maritime nations with the desire to work together. We've proven that. We have a record of it.

Our economic interests and our security are definitely intertwined. We all depend on the sea. Ninety percent of the world's commerce by volume travels by sea. Over 50 percent of the global merchant tonnage goes through the Strait of Malacca and the Straits of Sunda and Lambac. And 50 percent of the world's oil and two-thirds of that exported natural gas transit the South China Sea.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are what they call hyper-connected. What happens here affects Europe, it affects all the Americas, it affects the Middle East, everywhere. What happens in the MidEast affects us here and that's a fact of life. That's the era of globalization that we're in and we have common maritime challenges. Problems that are just too great for any one nation to solve alone. Piracy, natural disasters, illicit trafficking, there's more. We've talked about it. You and I know what it is. But together, we can tackle these issues and we've started to do that.

There is not one navy in this room or one nation that is unimportant. Each navy and each nation is a critical participant. Each of you has contributed to advancing regional security. We're already working independently. We're working bilaterally. And we're working multilaterally, but we are strongest when we all operate together.

There are 12,000 navy ships that are at least registered, there may be more than that, there are 12,000 registered navy ships in the world today. Most of them are corvettes or patrol craft or smaller, but that's extraordinary. And on any given day, as far as we know, based on all our collective maritime centers, what we report, over 700 of our ships are underway today dealing with maritime security in this world of ours.

Our foundation is solid and we've got a lot of tools to use. We also have different governance that we agree to follow. Call regs. In the past we've used maritime security cooperation. Data sharing. And regrettably, we have a lot of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief experience. We've got established forums. Like I said, this forum, IMDEX, IMSS and the International Sea Power Symposium.

So where are we today? Here in Qingdao we can be proud of our collective work. But I would submit we're just getting started, and Admiral Wu referred to that in his remarks just a little bit ago. We've just endorsed CUES and I appreciate the hard work developing that.

We've agreed to increase the standards that we will set at sea. We've agreed to establish proficiency in communications. We've agreed to establish common behavior at sea. We've agreed to prevent misunderstanding and miscalculations. And as was mentioned earlier, we all agreed to that.

We've also agreed to cooperate as multinational and coalitions in exercises and crises. Natural disasters like Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines has been proof of that. Last week's regrettable Republic of Korea passenger ferry disaster and I submit my condolences as well. Another example. And the ongoing search for the missing Malaysian airliner.

Like the upcoming Rim of the Pacific exercise which Admiral Harris will talk about, we have an opportunity to work, all of us together, in a coalition. It's a team effort.

The MH-370 search, 26 nations, 18 members here, nations, were involved and are involved still in that huge operation. We sent our newest, most recent and most available and modern, if you will, underwater search equipment and our nearest aircraft.

As we rebalance to the Asia Pacific, as we like to say, we'll continue to send our best maritime domain awareness assets, and as we increase our presence we'll continue working with friends and building partnerships, new and old, to develop regional capability.

So where do I think we need to go?

Well, we need to build on our achievements. We need to talk more openly. We need to talk more directly. We need to talk more frequently. And as I mentioned before, in my opinion, we need to train our reliefs, the people coming after us. That's great. We have established the agreement. We will all come together to do this, but we're not going to do it. It's going to be our commanding officers, it's going to be our junior officers that are going to make this happen. Habits are hard to change, they're hard to break, and we have to be relentless as we work through to bring forward these opportunities that we have.

We'll continue to face challenges. There will be crises ahead, and we can't foresee what's going to happen. That's the way it is out here in the Pacific, especially the Western Pacific. But

we can and we have to respond together, and together we can do more.

We'll prepare to respond multilaterally. Humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, search and rescue, and non-combatant evacuation operations. And as we all know, our enemy is time in those situations. Time can kill and time can save lives. It's how quickly we can do that. And I would submit we need to work out the details ahead of time. Figure out how we're going to talk with each other. What will our assignments be in a given operation? What will we agree to be an organization that makes sense in these operations? What are the common procedures that we would say we will all agree to follow when we operate together? What kind of data sharing should we agree to? And what kind of interoperability makes sense for all of us?

We're going to have to put it on the table, ladies and gentlemen, in order to move ahead and battle time. That is the enemy. Time in a crisis.

Routine exercises will prepare us as we work together in a crisis. We'll get better with our proficiency. We'll build confidence, and we'll certainly feel more competent as will our junior officers and those that we send to sea. And we'll learn from each other. Everybody brings something unique to the table and can contribute and that will, of course, build operational trust.

So let me close by saying I believe we all share a unique maritime heritage. We are mariners in an international medium, the sea. And we'll work together. We have a longstanding tradition. Our profession and our open communications will be the key. We have the common vision. We've signed up to the beginning of a common governance for the prosperity and the security of this region.

So I look forward to discussions here and in future opportunities where we have to work together. We're in unprecedented ground, I would submit to you, and this is the opportunity we have to take it forward.

Thank you all very much, and let me turn it over to Admiral Harris to say a few words.

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